(d) what steps Government propose to take to provide funds, so that it does not hit rice research work in the Institution?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Due to the tight squeeze on funding by developed countries, IRRI have initiated staff reductions that will result in a 30% reduction in unrestricted core funds used for personnel costs, Personnel costs make up 52% of IRRI's current budget and thus this is an area in which IRRI proposes to reduce its cost in order to balance its budget. Budgets for governance, over-head, research support and technical support will all be reduced by about an average 15%. These reductions in staff and funds for operations may have an effect on the output from IRRI.

(d) IRRI is a Philippines-based International Organization and is one of the 16 Centres of Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). India is one of the 43 donor members of CGIAR and contributes US $ 7.5 lakhs annually to the various Centres of CGIAR. Of this, IRRI gets a share of US$ 1.5 lakhs annually constituting 20% of the total contribution. Since the annual budget of IRRI is almost US $ 30.00 million, it is not possible for India alone to make up for the squeeze on funding by the developed nations.

Production of vegetables

2492. SHRI HARENDRA SINGH MALIK: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the estimated production of vegetables per year in the country;

(b) whether a large quantity of vegetables get perished every year;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to prevent the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) The estimated production of vegetables in the country during 1998-99 and 1999-2000 was 87.53 million tonnes and 90.83 million tonnes respectively.

(b) and (c) Post harvest losses of perishable fruits and vegetables are reported to be 8-37% due to various factors such as season of harvest, harvesting methods, improper grading and packing, poor transport, improper storage and post-harvest diseases.

(d) The Government of India is improving cold storage/storage facilities for horticulture produce in order to reduce post harvest losses. National Horticulture Board provides financial assistance for construction/ expansion/modernization of cold storages and storages for horticulture produce through its "Capital Investment Subsidy Scheme". During 2001-02, the Board has created additional cold storage capacity of 20.32 lakh MT against the target of 12.00 lakh MT. Further, in the current year, upto 28.6.2002, the Board has created cold storage capacity of 4.89 lakh MT.

National Horticulture Board also provides financial assistance under its scheme on "Development of Commercial Horticulture through Production and post-harvest management" for developing facilities such as cool chain infrastructure, refrigerated van etc.

Besides, National Horticulture Research and Development Foundation is also engaged in developing on- farm handling and storages facilities for Onion, Garlic and vegetables.

Import of improved variety seeds

†2493. PROF. R.B.S. VARMA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have to import seeds of improved variety in order to meet their shortage;

(b) if so, the total number of the varieties of seeds imported during the last three years and the amount spent year-wise on their import, separately; and

(c) the details of distribution of those seeds to various States/Union Territories?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.